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Post Reporter David Hoffman Wins 2 Awards

By Eleanor Randolph
Washington Post Staff Writer

David Hoffman, a White House correspondent for The Washington Post since 1982, was named winner of two awards last night at the White House Correspondents Association annual dinner.

Hoffman won the Merriman Smith Memorial Award, given for a story written on deadline, for an article written Sept. 27 when President Reagan blamed a terrorist attack on the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut on the "near destruction" of U.S. intelligence during the Carter administration. The remark set off a furor among Democrats, and Reagan later called former president Jimmy Carter to explain that he had not meant to blame Carter or his administration for the terrorist attack, in which two Americans were killed.

Reagan's comment, which was not part of the prepared text, was made during a question-and-answer period after a speech in Bowling Green, Ohio.

Hoffman, a specialist in economic reporting before he began covering the White House, also won the Aldo Beckman Memorial Award for a series of budget-related stories from Nov. 13 to Dec. 11, 1984.

Other White House correspondents awards included the Raymond Clapper Memorial Award to Mark J. Thompson of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

Thompson wrote a series on a design flaw in Bell helicopters that resulted in the deaths of almost 250 U.S. servicemen.

The series, which created a furor in Fort Worth where Bell is the second largest employer, also won Thompson the Pulitzer prize for public service last week.

David Rogers of The Wall Street Journal also won two prizes. Rogers, who covers Capitol Hill for the Journal, and Brooks Jackson won the Worth Bingham Memorial Prize for their article on "Money and Politics."

Second place winners of the Bingham award were Chris Collins and John Hanchette of Gannett News Service for their series "The Vaccine Machine."

Rogers also won a second place Clapper award for his coverage of Congress, including his breaking story on CIA involvement in the mining of harbors in Nicaragua.

Honorable mention for the Clapper award went to Fred Hiatt of The Washington Post for his coverage of the Pentagon.

The Worth Bingham awards are presented in memory of Robert Worth Bingham, the publisher of The Louisville Courier-Journal who died in 1967. Beckman was a correspondent and bureau chief for the Chicago Tribune.

Clapper was a Scripps-Howard correspondent who died in a 1944 plane crash while serving as a war reporter in the Pacific.

Merriman Smith, who was White House correspondent for UPI, was renowned as the wire service reporter who first filed on the shooting of President John F. Kennedy.

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